

WASHINGTON: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1930.

Abraham Lincoln's Home

NEXT Wednesday is the 121st anniversary of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, and if to do honor to it there be pilgrimages to the spot near Hodgenville, Ky., where he came into this world, no less will memory be turned to the New Salem Hill in Illinois which was the scene of his early manhood and where his happiest days were spent and his first successes achieved, and whatever education he possessed acquired out of the curiously rich opportunities of that rustic hamlet. When Hawthorne met Lincoln at the White House in 1857 he divined what had brought Lincoln to that eminence, saying that he "seems weighted with rich results of village experience."

The central and southern portions of Illinois were quickly settled after the State's admission into the Union in 1818 by people chiefly from the Southern States, among which two names will stand out—namely, John Cañaron, from Georgia, and James Rutledge from South Carolina, both millwrights, who first settled in the Concord neighborhood of Sangamon County and began to look for a place to build a dam and a mill on Concord creek. The water here was inconstant, and so they turned to the Sangamon River, to a spot about 20 miles north of Springfield, where Cañaron in 1850 had purchased 160 acres of woodland and prairie along the river. Here in October they planted into hicks and asfrens the level space of one of the lottly hills and called the town New Salem. The next fall they built their mill on the shore of the river just below the town. It was a place where the villagers could look to the east at the wooded slopes on the far side of the river of 1840 and 1841 and to the far west at the sunlit prairie. It was a windward spot of many stinging hills, where the sky and the clouds were more visible than in the valleys. But perhaps these men chose the hill so that the villagers could better see the Indians, if any approached from the tribes still lingering about this remoteness.

New Salem was destined to have a brief but incredible career. The Muses seem to have presided at its founding, since they have preserved its memory equally with any place

New Salem, Illinois, Where "Honest Abe" Kept Store and Laid the Foundations of His Future Greatness, Is Now a National Shrine.

By EDGAR LEE MASTERS

In America. Though it faded away after a few years and the hill resumed its primitive aspect of grass and its pastoral silence, in keeping with Lincoln's obscurity before the debates with Douglas in 1858, yet it rose again with his fame and became a place of endless pilgrimage, especially since the State took the land for a State park.

It was an April day of 1831 when the tall youth Lincoln, with his neighbor, was trying to dislodge a flatboat from the dam here as the villagers flocked down from their shops and stores to lend a hand so that the craft with its cargo could pursue its way to New Orleans, from the Sangamon into the Illinois and thence into the Mississippi. This was Lincoln's introduction to the people of New Salem, though he was taking his cargo for Ottawa, who at this time was conducting a store just up the Illinois.

As a consequence of all this, when Lincoln returned from New Orleans in July, 1831, having by now abandoned his father's home near Decatur, Ill., for good, he came to New Salem, where, to use his own words, he "stopped indefinitely, and for the first time, as it were, by himself." The village and 100 inhabitants, it had the Rutledge and Cañaron mill; it had a tannery and a quarry; it made shoes and hats and furniture, kegs and barrels; it carded and spun wool; it had boarding houses and a tavern founded by the miller, James Rutledge, also to be remembered as the father of Ann, whose name will last as long as Highland Mary's or Laura's. Then at New Salem there was the grog shop, as well as the barrel in the rear of the grocery store; there was a cock pit and a race track, for the town was in the midst of roasting



Mr. Masters.

neighborhoods at Virginia and Kentucky like the Clarys, the Armstrongs, the Greens, the Watkinses and the Kirbys, hearty and cheerful men, quiet to a quartet but of astounding generosity, who had been about the masters and the tavern, and the fields where there were gamblers and animal trainers and where they would not have been marked out as not native to the crowd.

Caring for six years lived Lincoln, earning his living as a storekeeper with Ottum, with William G. Green and with Berry, until he became an office holder. Jack Kelso, the man of all work, was the best genius of the community. With him Lincoln found Shakespeare and walked about the hills and fished the river. Lincoln pitched horseshoes with the better and the cooper; he stood as judge of horse races and cockfights, of foot races and wrestling matches, and he conquered local battles to his own great popularity, by throwing them down and rubbing smartweed in their eyes until they cried enough. There was great riding here, for Jack Armstrong's brother-in-law was the most famous rider of that day or since in all this country; Jack himself being the strongest of all the strong men here whom Lincoln finally plumed to the grass in a test of strength and skill. Another name that will live is that of Hannah Armstrong, Jack's wife. She was good to Lincoln in those days when his clothes needed mending and when an invitation to supper was a blessing; and in the Civil War Lincoln remembered all her benefactions by discharging her son Duff from the army in response to her humble and touching appeal.

At New Salem, Lincoln studied grammar and mathematics under Mentor Graham the village school teacher; he became a surveyor here and the postmaster of the town. In 1834 he was elected to the Legislature from New Salem after a campaign in which the Clary boys followed him over the country ready to fight with able fists if any one spoke disparagingly about their idol. And along the way he was studying law and trying pig cases for Jack Kelso and horse cases for the farmers, before Justice Bowling Green, a man of Palestinian physique and humor, who rolled his corpulent sides at Lincoln's odd twists of logic and whimsical fables right from the soil.

There were here rich life and great opportunity for development of the right mind, and Lincoln had it. When the Blackhawk War came on in 1832

Lincoln raised a company at New Salem and was elected captain of it, with Jack Armstrong as first sergeant, while his grandfather, Squire Davis Masters, who was later to be identified for so long with the Rutledges and the Greens, the Clarys and the Kirbys and Watkinses, and the New Salem people, though then living in Morgan County, 50 miles away, went to that war and was afterward made a captain of militia by Gov. Reynolds.

So these days of study and fun, of debates and talks and electioneering, and storekeeping, and walks in spring, of the flying crow, and hunting in the fall when the oak leaves grew brown, of snow on the hill and the prairie, and ice on the river, and long steps in the vital air—all this vigorous, joyous, humorous life was soon over for Lincoln.

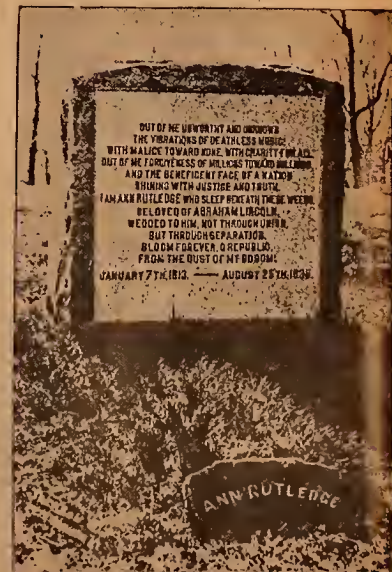
In 1837 he moved to Springfield and soon after the life went out of New Salem. By this time Ann Rutledge had died and her father had gone, taking the family to live in the Concord settlement eight miles north of the New Salem hill. But by this time Lincoln had surveyed Petersburg in the valley of the Sangamon River, and over the lovely hills above it, about 1840, he was named after Peter Lukins the New Salem cobbler, and very soon Petersburg became the county seat of Menard County, which was created by slicing off the northern part of Sangamon; and that left New Salem in Menard.

Shortly now the inhabitants of New Salem began to scaller, mostly to Petersburg, Dr. John Allen, Samuel

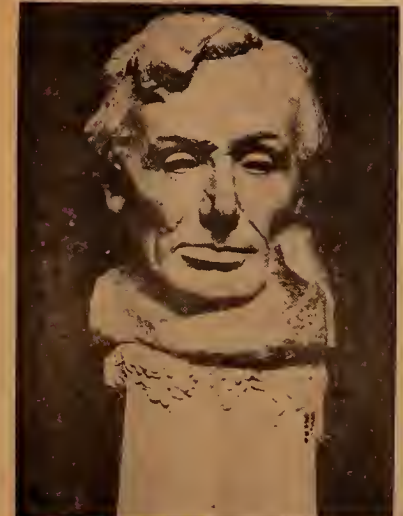
Hill, the merchant; Mentor Graham, the teacher; and the wool carder. Some of them were in Petersburg as very old men when I lived there as a boy. Of others then dead there were little stories which were told me by my grandfather and my father, too. Many of the New Salem people moved their log houses to Petersburg, and they were pointed out to us. This stood at New Salem, Lincoln's home!

As Lincoln came to Petersburg to attend circuit court up to the time that he was elected President, one wonders if he ever climbed the New Salem hill and looked over the silent melancholy of vanished houses. Did he visit the hill when he came near it in 1841 to speak the funeral address over Squire Bowling Green, when he was so overcome by grief that he could not finish what he meant to say? At that time there were only ten houses left, by 1845 only two houses remained, one being the Rutledge Tavern.

Perhaps the dramatic finale of New Salem was the disappearance of Jack Kelso. This may have been about 1847, but he had endured loneliness a long while by this time. To the last he was taking fish into Petersburg and peddling them there, but when the Ottum family was gone and the Lincoln and Berry store and the Lincoln and Green store and nothing remained but his poor shack and the Rutledge Tavern, memory was doubtless too much for the strange man who had sat under the oak trees of New Salem hill reading Shakespeare with Lincoln, now a rising lawyer in Springfield and gone from his life forever. As late as 1874 the walls of the Rutledge Tavern still stood. But when I was a boy living in Petersburg and used to go to what was then called Old Salem instead of New Salem to fish around the dam of the mill I often eluded to the spot of the village to look over what was then only a cow pasture. Everything was gone, though the foundations of the houses lay hidden under the weeds and grass and were easily located and excavated in 1917 when, by this aid



Grave of Ann Rutledge, the sweetheart of Lincoln's youth, at Petersburg, Ill., with inscription by Edgar Lee Masters.



Gutzon Borglum's head of Lincoln in the Capitol at Washington, D. C.

of maps and plate on record in Petersburg, guided also by the word of some of the remaining pioneers, all the sites of the houses were identified and the buildings restored, so that today one may look upon the replica of the Orffut store and the Lincoln-Berry store, the Rutledge Tavern—a picture of which had been preserved from 1874—and upon the whole village indeed, cooper shops, blacksmith shops and what not, as it looked when Lincoln was trying to shoo-bye it, but not without the dam in that April of 1831. It is now known as Old Salem State Park and is an American shrine as duty matters Mount Vernon. During the year thousands of people go up the New Salem hill to see where Lincoln kept store and lived as a young man.

AMONO the residents of New Salem whose lives touched those of my people were the Herndon, one of whom, William H. Herndon, formed a special law partnership with my father after he was elected State's attorney of Menard County in the twenties. Another was that Samuel Hill, already mentioned, who, according to tradition, buried Lincoln's ass-ay against the Bible in the New Salem days, saying that Lincoln should not imperil his future.

In 1846 my grandfather moved from Morgan to Menard County and at the same time bought a farm located six miles north of Petersburg and three miles from Concord Church, not far from where James Rutledge was then living and only a short distance from the homestead of that John McNamar who had kept store at New Salem, masquerading under the name of John McNeil, while he was engaged to marry Ann Rutledge, and who disappeared mysteriously back to Ohio or New York and was not seen in Illinois until after the death of Lincoln in 1865, when he returned to Concord, not to New Salem. My grandfather bought the farm from William Anno, and as part of the purchase price he wrote a writing, promising to deliver to Anno within six months a good span of horses and a good wagon to be worth \$257. At the same time Anno gave my grandfather a money note for \$257 in payment of a crib of corn, and thus they owed each other an equal amount. Anno assigned him nothing to deliver until Anno my grandfather would not deliver the horses and wagon without being paid \$257 for the corn he had sold Anno. Hill didn't owe this note, to be sure, but on the other hand Hill could not take title to the horses and wagon writing without being subject to a defense of set-off for the corn note, because the document assigned to Hill was not in law enforceable and, if assigned, carried the burden of any defense which could be made against it in the hands of Anno himself. \$257 Hill sued my grandfather, and Lincoln defended the suit, setting up in a long pleading still in the records of the court at Petersburg the whole transaction. There Lincoln lost the case, and unjustly as a matter of law and right. What was strange of all, the court went further into error and decreed my grandfather to pay Hill \$257—not to deliver the horses and the wagon. And, moreover, my grandfather lost what Anno owed him for the corn. Anno's note remaining uncollectible.

It was Lincoln's habit, so my grandfather told me, to be about the square of Petersburg when court was in session, where he would be advising people about their troubles or talking to friends in cases where he was preparing to try. I fancy that Herndon was generally with him. At another time Lincoln settled for my grandfather a business dispute with a neighbor, and still later, when my grandfather became a Justice of the peace, Lincoln came out to the Masters farm and tried a case before him. It was out under the trees, because the men were chewing tobacco and my grandfather would not allow the case to be tried in the house.

During the time that Lincoln lived at New Salem one of the stores there was conducted by Rowan Herndon, who was a cousin of Lincoln's future law partner and his biographer as well, the well-remembered William H. Herndon, born in Kentucky in 1818. Lincoln boarded at the Rowan Herndon house in New Salem for a time. The first meeting between Lincoln and William H. Herndon took place when in 1832 an attempt was made to prove that the Sangamon River was navigable; and to this end a little steamer called the Tallman set forth to reach the Illinois River by way of the Sangamon, starting from



A White House reception during the administration of President Lincoln.

a place near Springfield. Rowan Herndon was chosen to pilot the steamer and he selected Lincoln as his helper. Lincoln is reputed to have described the Tallman as having "a five-foot boiler and a seven-foot whistle, so that every time the whistle blew the boat stopped." According to some verses of the time, this is what happened:

"And when we came to Salem dam
Up we went against it jam.
We tried to cross with all our might,
But found we couldn't start at night."

When the steamer got over the dam by testing part of it away and putting on extra steam, the voyage was resumed, with William H. Herndon, then a boy of 14, riding on horseback with other curious boys along the bank of the river, easily keeping pace, as the boat was making 4 miles a day. Finally the boat tied up and Herndon went on board and there for the first time met Lincoln.

Eleven years after this they went into law partnership in Springfield and maintained the relationship until Lincoln left for Washington in February of 1861. Even then Lincoln asked that the sign marked Lincoln & Herndon be left to swing at the entrance of the office doorway, saying that when he returned from his task as President they would resume the practice of law together.

I count it one of the privileges of my life that as a boy I saw on several occasions this eager, devoted and gifted man, who was for years the invaluable aid and inspiration of Lincoln, being among the first, if not the first, of all men to divine the unusual character and peculiar abilities of Lincoln. Herndon was a vast reader in philosophy and history, and it was his habit to give Lincoln synopses of long books, to talk to him about Emerson's essays and Whitman's poetry. By some prophetic insight Herndon foresaw Lincoln in a historic

role of national importance, and wrote letters without end over the country touching the political crisis which arose after the Lincoln-Douglas debates, as he also traveled to New York and Washington and Boston to confer with Greeley, Garrison and Theodore Parker and others concerning the political condition in the West and Lincoln's relation to it. There is a moving fidelity in the tone of these letters and in Herndon's apostolic labors along these years. Those who knew him spoke of his indefatigable devotion to the truth and of his clearness of vision when seeking it. In such words did my father write to Beveridge of Herndon; and it is gratifying to see Herndon's character for integrity established by Beveridge's monumental work, considering that for a quarter of a century any little moralist could cast a stone at him.

Often in Petersburg I visit with Herndon and my father to the court house yard and sit with them on the grass under the trees, while they

talked over their cases, it may have been; or of Lincoln, no doubt; since in later years my father told me many stories of Lincoln and by Lincoln which Herndon had told him—some as humorous as anything in Rabelais. Now they agreed to laugh—that I remember!

At this time Mentor Graham was living in Petersburg; no doubt Herndon had known him at New Salem; but at any rate here he was now, a very old man, much given to litigation and very testy and easy to tease. One time I came to the square with a toy bug. My father, who was standing with Herndon in the entrance of the office doorway, took the bug from me and suspended it from behind over the head of Graham so that its strolling legs quivered suddenly before Graham's nose. He struck at it viciously and missed it as it was again loitered in front of his face.

"Did you possibly observe an insect in front of my face?" exclaimed Graham, excitedly. When in 1923 I was talking to my father about my memory of this episode, the bug and the men who laughed, my father quipped Graham's grammatical language, remarking that it was his that set off the bumper of the crowd, of himself and Herndon.

Up to the time that we moved to the Spring River country, about 40 miles north of New Salem, we often made up parties in Petersburg to go fishing from the New Salem dam and river about for the lake. The lake was quite intact, and there was a fine water mill, there not the one of Lincoln's day, but what seemed a very old man for that occasion, and scarcely anything of the dam.

Some of the memories of New Salem are given in "Miles Miller"; but there were many other things that I have reported in that book: one when Herndon was along with a party of law, my father, of course, who had been many years in New Salem, a comical colored man of Petersburg, who was made the playfellow and the object of good-natured jokes by the white men. On one occasion, he substituted a small bag for a large fish on Dick's hook while he was up the bank getting a stringer from the quizz. He came back to my father and to soliloquize on the strange metaphors of the fishermen, who were rebelling about and laughing of the men.

On one of these jaunts to New Salem I all but lost my life. I was climbing about on the dam, against the repeated warnings of my father and the other men, when I suddenly stepped into the still race and went down three to 20 feet of still but terrifying water. It well happened that the mill was not running. Under the third time, a young man, Jim Arnold, seized me by the hair and held me above the water until my father and the men could drag me to land, all but gone. The next day I left New Salem today will and Jim Arnold near the New Salem dam, where a museum where he exhibits an Ingersoll model of the Lincoln mill, which he to electricity and made to run for a small fee.

On those numerous times when I drove with my grandfather to Concord Church, passing the house of John McNamar on the way, I always pondered the sign in the gable space of his house bearing the words "Salt for Sale." So, indeed, there was, and many, too, which my grandfather sometimes bought for me from the withered, crows-like, melancholy-looking John McNamar, who was often standing by his gate as we came in view. And on a day when I was with my father and Herndon from Petersburg to the Masters farm, I saw by what is called the Concord way, past McNamar's house, where we stopped for a while as Herndon talked of this mysterious figure of memories and legends. Perhaps the legend is true; it must have been about New Salem and Lincoln; for Herndon was never done with gathering material and verifying it for his "Life of Lincoln."

But the day that stands most impressive to my memory is one in New Salem, when for some reason the fishing was interrupted while Herndon and my father climbed the hill, as I followed them, until we came into site of the last prime, the cross of the hilltop and the western sky curbed with afternoon sunlight. The ripe autumn of the hilltop days in my memory, as one may be moved by it to this day. Perhaps Herndon wanted to point out some particular spot of the vanished village, some place where Lincoln had wrestled or walked, or where one of the houses stood, or where Bowling Green was accustomed to loaf. I was lagging behind them to the grass of this pasture, but looking ahead I saw these two standing in talk, my father so strong and trim and young, and Herndon vastly different with the years that were on him. Their figures were etched blackly against the flame of the afternoon—and in my memory for life.

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The Leaker

by Edgar A. Guest

The man was down and out,
He said;
He owned no stocks, no fertile lands,
No fire at which to warm his hands.
He had no purse, he had no coat,
He had no muffler for his throat.
He seemed to be a ne'er-do-well,
Who lacked all things men buy and sell.
And yet against the winter
He had a dream which kept him warm.



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